

Veterans Committee Meeting Minutes - 12/17/25

In attendance: Steve Connor, Central/Western Veterans Services, Gumersindo Gomez, Bilingual Veterans Center, Michael Hagmaier, Soldier On, Vega Johnson, Three County CoC, Sue White, VA

Hampden CoC Update

- 15 veterans on by-names list, several of whom are in housing search with vouchers
- will be convening a next by-names list shortly; there are a couple of new names on the list - need to investigate who is service connected and who is not

Three County CoC Update

- approx. 50 on by-names list, most of whom are in Soldier On and in their transitional program

Soldier On

- Fuel Assistance program for veterans - funded \$15,000 - spent \$6K so far
- Project HOPE - committed funds to veteran households who are ineligible for SSVF
- SSVF renewals in process and GPD renewals as well - due in Feb.
- Holyoke Veterans Treatment Court - Mass Trial Court taking it over - Soldier On asked to be a sub-contractor - will continue with that program
- Housing wait lists are long - Agawam wait list is 22 people; not many openings coming up

VA

- low on vouchers for first time ever - had to get some from Central MA
- requested 75 vouchers (via Northampton Housing Authority) - waiting to hear on that
- lost some VA staff in MA - not in Western MA
- partnering with assisted living facilities - via the PACE program - aim is to keep people out of nursing homes with wrap around medical services
- Moving Forward - also a state funded effort to keep people out of nursing homes - works with people in rehab facilities to move into independent housing with support services (up to \$50,000/person). Sue will share more on the program. Very promising.
- continuing effort to improve data sharing between HUD and VA - one goal is to get data on unsheltered veterans into the system

Veterans Services

- making progress on a pilot to establish a veterans services support person at Housing Court (i.e., institutionalizing the role Steve has played for years - thank you Steve!)

Bilingual Veterans Center

- 4 openings at transitional housing (\$325/month plus state veterans
- 2 permanent coming up at 40 Cass St

HUD/CoC Update: We discussed HUD's current threat to CoC funding resulting from its new Notice of Funding Opportunity, capping the amount CoCs can spend on permanent supportive housing (PSH) at 30% - while our CoCs spend roughly 84% of its funds on PSH. This change would result in a loss of housing for hundreds in the region (we have over 400 PSH units across the four counties). Advocacy continues with our congressional delegation to stop these changes from going forward. Read more on the [background here](#) from the MA Housing and Shelter Alliance and [take action here](#). Lawsuits are pending and the next hearing is this Friday, Dec. 19. Meanwhile, contingency planning is underway to respond in the worse case scenario (e.g., the state filling the gap; agencies relying on their own savings, HUD amendments to extend current contracts).

Next meeting date: Wed., March 18, 2 pm